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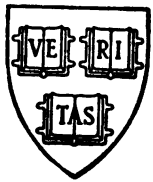

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THE Beacon Biographies OF Eminent Americans

Edited by

M. A. DeWolfe Howe

The Summit of Beacon Hill, 1808.

PUBLISHED BY
Small Maynard & Company
6 Beacon Street
BOSTON

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

BY

ANNIE FIELDS

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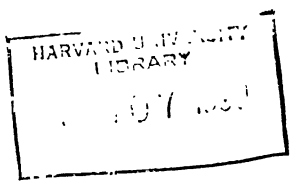
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The photogravure used as a frontispiece to this volume is from a photograph taken about 1862, by J. W. Black, Boston. The present engraving is by John Andrew & Son, Boston.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

It is necessary only to say, in introducing this little volume, that Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. have given courteous permission to quote with freedom from the books relating to Hawthorne which they publish. The reader will see that the quotations are made largely from Hawthorne's own words, with the purpose of letting him speak as fully as possible for himself. The reader who is familiar with Yesterdays with Authors, *by James T. Fields, will observe, moreover, that certain letters from Hawthorne to Mr. Fields are not taken from that book. They are printed here for the first time.*

SEPTEMBER, 1899

CHRONOLOGY.

1804

July 4. Nathaniel Hawthorne was born at Salem, Mass.

1808

His father died when away at sea, in Surinam; and the family went to live with his maternal grandfather, Richard Manning.

1813–18

Lived with his mother and two sisters near Raymond, Maine.

1818

Was at school in Salem.

1820

His family returned to Salem.

1821–25

At Bowdoin College with Longfellow, Franklin Pierce, and Horatio Bridge.

1828

Published anonymously *Fanshawe, a Tale.*

1828–36

Lived quietly in Salem, writing for annuals and magazines, and preparing the way for the fame to come later.

1836

March–August. Edited the last six numbers of the second volume of the *American Magazine of Useful Knowledge.*

1837

Published *Twice-told Tales.*

July. The book was appreciatively reviewed by Longfellow in the *North American Review.*

1839

Became engaged to Miss Sophia Peabody. Was appointed weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom-house under George Bancroft.

1841

Lived at Brook Farm, West Roxbury. Published *Grandfather's Chair*, *Famous Old People*, and *Liberty Tree.*

1842

July 9. Marriage to Sophia Peabody.
August. Settled in the "Old Manse" at Concord. Published second volume of *Twice-told Tales*, and *Biographical Stories for Children.*

1844

March 3. His daughter Una was born.

1845

Edited the *Journal of an African Cruiser*, by his friend Bridge.

1846

Published *Mosses from an Old Manse.* Removed to Salem.
March 23. Received the appointment of surveyor in the Custom-house at Salem.
June 22. His son Julian born in Boston.

1849

Lost his office in the Custom-house.
July 31. His mother died in his house.

1850

Published *The Scarlet Letter.* Removed to Lenox, leaving Salem forever.

1850–51

Wrote *The House of the Seven Gables.*

1851

Published *The House of the Seven Gables, True Stories from History and Biography,* and *The Snow Image, and Other Tales.*
May 20. His second daughter, Rose, born.

1851–52

Winter. Moved his family to West Newton while looking for a house to buy.

1852

June. Bought The Wayside in Concord, and moved into it. Published *The Blithedale Romance* and *A Wonder-book for Children.*
September. Published a *Life of Franklin Pierce.*

1853

Published *Tanglewood Tales.*
March. Nominated and confirmed American consul at Liverpool.
July. Sailed for England.

1854

Republished *Mosses from an Old Manse*, revised and enlarged.

1855

Visited the "Lake Country."

1857

Fall. Resigned his office as consul.

1858

January 3. Left London with his family for a two years' tour on the Continent.
February–May. Lived in Rome.
Summer. Spent in and near Florence. Began *The Marble Faun.*

1858–59

Winter. Lived in Rome.

1859

Spring. Returned to England to write.

1860

March. Finished and published *The Marble Faun.*
June. Returned home to America.

1862

February. Took a trip to Washington and into Virginia in the track of the armies.

March. Returned to Concord.

1863

Published *Our Old Home.*

1864

May 14. Left Concord with Franklin Pierce for a tour in Northern New England.

May 19. Nathaniel Hawthorne died at Plymouth, N.H.

1868

Passages from the American Note-books published.

1870

Passages from the English Note-books published.

1871

Passages from the French and Italian Note-books published.

1872

Septimius Felton published.

1876

The Dolliver Romance, and Other Pieces, and *Fanshawe, and Other Pieces* (now first collected), published.

1877

Legends of New England, Legends of the Province House, Tales of the White Hills, and *A Virtuoso's Collection, and Other Tales*, published.

1883

Dr. Grimshawe's Secret, Sketches and Studies, Tales, Sketches, and Other Papers, and *Complete Works* published.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

I.

In the year 1804, when Hawthorne was born, Salem, his birthplace, was a flourishing town. Cultivated persons were living there, and many of his contemporaries were men and women accustomed to the finest amenities of social life.

His father, a lover of books and a silent man, was a sea-captain, like so many of the most respectable men of that period. He died at Surinam of fever, when he was only little more than thirty years of age, leaving his wife with three children to weep for him. She was only twenty-eight when he died; but she shut herself into her own room, where she remained for the greater part of the forty subsequent years of her existence. Hawthorne was an only son, adored by his mother; but, deprived of society by her hermit-like habits, he

grew up a lonely child. Dr. Worcester, the compiler of the American Dictionary bearing his name, was Hawthorne's devoted instructor. There was probably no one his superior at that time, but the cheerful habit of a continuous school and school-boy companionship was never a part of Hawthorne's experience and happiness.

In a brief autobiography he says of these early days: —

"I was born in the town of Salem, Massachusetts, in a house built by my grandfather, who was a maritime personage. The old household estate was in another part of the town, and had descended in the family ever since the settlement of the country; but this old man of the sea exchanged it for a lot of land near the wharves and convenient to his business, where he built the house (which is still standing) and laid out a garden, where I rolled on a grass plot under an apple-tree and picked abundant currants. . . .

"One of the peculiarities of my boyhood was a grievous disinclination to go to school; and (Providence favoring me in this natural repugnance) I never did go half as much as other boys, partly owing to delicate health (which I made the most of for the purpose) and partly because, much of the time, there were no schools within reach."

Hawthorne's lameness when a boy of nine years, the result of accident in a game of bat and ball, threatened at one time to be permanent. For three years he was left much to his own devices with respect to reading and study. His sister Elizabeth says, in a letter written to his children, "Undoubtedly, he would have wanted many of the qualities which distinguished him in after life if his genius had not been thus shielded in childhood."

Perhaps it was with some thought of recovering the boy's perfect strength at this time that the family went away far

into the wilderness to a place owned by his uncle, near Raymond, on Sebago Lake. It was of the life at Sebago that Hawthorne chiefly loved to speak in his later days. His mother and sisters enjoyed the freedom and the solitude apparently as well as he; for, when his mother determined to send him back to Salem to prepare for college, the family remained behind until 1820, the year previous to Hawthorne's entrance into Bowdoin College. "The immense State of Maine, in the year 1818," writes Henry James, "must have had an even more magnificently natural character than it possesses at the present day; and the uncle's dwelling, in consequence of being in a little smarter style than the primitive structures that surrounded it, was known by the villagers as 'Manning's Folly.'" Hawthorne spoke of the place to a friend later in life as the one where "I first got my cursed habits of solitude"; but, how-

ever the loveliness of Nature may have confirmed him in the power of remote living, we have seen how he had been accustomed in the world of a large town to live apart from men in a way much more difficult to support. "I lived," he said, "in Maine like a bird of the air, so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed."

Hawthorne wrote to his sister Elizabeth, while she was still in this paradise and he in Salem at the home of one of his kind uncles: —

"Sept. 28, 1819.

"Dear Sister,— . . . I do not know what to do with myself here. I shall never be contented here I am sure. I now go to a five-dollar school,— I that have been to a ten-dollar one, 'O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou fallen!' I wish I was but in Raymond, and I should be happy. But ''twas light that ne'er shall shine again on life's dull stream.' I have read *Waverley*, *The Mys-*

teries of Udolpho, The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom, Roderick Random, and the first volume of *The Arabian Nights.*" . . .

And to his mother he says: "I dreamed the other night that I was walking by the Sebago, and, when I awoke, was so angry at finding it all a delusion, that I gave Uncle Robert (who sleeps with me) a most horrible kick. I don't read so much now as I did, because I am more taken up in studying. I am quite reconciled to going to college, since I am to spend the vacations with you. Yet four years of the best part of my life is a great deal to throw away. I have not yet concluded what profession I shall have. The being a minister is of course out of the question. I should not think that even you could desire to choose so dull a way of life. Oh, no, mother, I was not born to vegetate forever in one place, and to live and die as calm and as tranquil as —

a puddle of water. As to lawyers, there are so many of them already that one-half of them (upon a moderate calculation) are in a state of actual starvation. A physician, then, seems to be 'Hobson's choice'; but yet I should not like to live by the diseases and infirmities of my fellow-creatures. And it would weigh very heavily on my conscience, in the course of my practice, if I should chance to send any unlucky patient *ad inferum*, which, being interpreted, is 'to the realms below.' Oh that I were rich enough to live without a profession! What do you think of my becoming an author, and relying for support upon my pen? Indeed, I think the illegibility of my handwriting is very author-like. How proud you would be to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull! But authors are always poor devils, and therefore Satan may take them. I am in the same predicament as

the honest gentleman in *Espriella's Letters*: —

'I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
A-musing in my mind what garment I shall wear.'

. . . Your affectionate son,

"NATHL. HATHORNE.

"Do not show this letter."

He seems to have written to his mother out of the fulness of his heart, as he seldom, if ever, allowed himself to do with any one else; and yet there is a frankness in all his friendly letters quite at varience with his restricted power of expression face to face.

At Bowdoin College, Hawthorne found three lifelong friends: Longfellow, whom he knew then but slightly; Franklin Pierce; and Horatio Bridge. To the latter he addressed the beautiful prefatory letter affixed to *The Snow Image*,

and Other Tales, now incorporated in the *Twice-told Tales*. He writes: "If any body is responsible at this day for my being an author, it is yourself. I know not whence your faith came; but while we were lads together at a country college, gathering blueberries in study hours under those tall academic pines or watching the great logs as they tumbled along the current of the Androscoggin, or shooting pigeons or grey squirrels in the woods, or bat-fowling in the summer twilight, or catching trout in that shadowy little stream which, I suppose, is still wandering riverward through the forest, though you and I will never cast a line in it again,—two idle lads, in short (as we need not fear to acknowledge now), doing a hundred things the Faculty never heard of, or else it had been the worse for us,—still it was your prognostic of your friend's destiny that he was to be a writer of fiction."

"A very pretty picture," as Henry

James says; "but it is a picture of boys at school rather than that of Englishmen of the same age at Oxford and Cambridge, the advantages of which great institutions Hawthorne could never know. . . . Bowdoin College at this time," continues Mr. James, "was a homely, simple, frugal, 'country college' of the old-fashioned American stamp, exerting within its limits a civilizing influence, working amid the forests and the lakes, the log houses and the clearings, towards the amenities and humanities and other collegiate graces, and offering a very sufficient education to the future lawyers, merchants, clergymen, politicians, and editors of the very active and knowledge-loving community that supported it."

In such an atmosphere, virtues which were Hawthorne's, of probity and truthfulness, found opportunity to make themselves evident. A letter addressed by the president of Bowdoin College to his

mother asks her co-operation "in the attempt to induce your son faithfully to observe the laws of this institution," and adds, "Perhaps he might not have gamed, were it not for the influence of a student we have dismissed from college." This letter was apparently sent back for Hawthorne to read, who replies: "I was fully as willing to play as the person he suspects of having enticed me, and would have been influenced by no one. I have a great mind to commence playing again, merely to show him that I scorn to be seduced by another into anything wrong."

One thing may be observed with tolerable clearness,— that Hawthorne was to find small external aid to education. The true preparation for the career which already lay duskily outlined before him came from his unusual power of reading. It is true that he found Hume's History dull, and laid it aside for another season; but French and

English literature, generally speaking, he gradually made his own.

His impatience to get home for his college vacations already shows the strong and sometimes wilful determination which marked his character. He writes to his sister Louisa, "It is expedient for me to return to Salem immediately"; and, after giving his reasons, he adds: "If you are at a loss for an excuse, say that mother is out of health or Uncle Robert is going on a journey on account of his health and wishes me to attend him, . . . or, if none of these excuses suit you, write and order me to come home without any. If you do not, I shall certainly forge a letter; for I WILL be at home within a week."

Perhaps these examples do not precisely illustrate what Mr. Fields, in his *Yesterdays with Authors*, calls the "stern probity" of Hawthorne, nor his truthfulness; but he was still young and wilful. That the virtues of truth and

honesty were his in a marked degree may be seen constantly in his future career. He never possessed a superabundance of money, but no temptation ever lured him into buying, or letting any member of his family buy, anything which he could not pay for at once. He practised no self-deception upon this head, never fancying that his books should bring more money than the market for them warranted, and never mortgaging his brains in advance.

Hawthorne was of age when he left college with the determination, as we have seen, of looking about him before deciding positively upon his choice of a profession; but no one could have foreseen, least of all himself, the solitary condition in which he was to pass the next twelve or fourteen years in his mother's house in Salem. He could not be called idle, though, as his son Julian says, "there was an indolence in his nature such as, by the mercy of Providence,

is not seldom found to mark the early years of those who have some great mission to perform in the world"; yet he set himself sedulously to his task of composition. He tried his hand at verse, but soon told his sister Elizabeth there would be no more of that. At the same time he was writing a book called *Seven Tales of my Native Land*, of which his sister said, "I read these tales, and liked them." Hawthorne carried them, he tells us, to seventeen publishers unsuccessfully. Surely, not an encouraging beginning for a young author! He persevered, however, and wrote a consecutive tale called *Fanshawe*, which Miss Hawthorne liked less well than the *Seven Tales;* but Hawthorne was determined to publish it, which he did in Boston, "paying one hundred dollars for the purpose." It must have had a small circulation, because Hawthorne was very successful in destroying it later, hardly more than six copies

being now known to exist. Mr. Lathrop, the son-in-law of Hawthorne, gives a synopsis of and extracts from the tale; but the author wrote once to Mr. Fields: "You make an inquiry about some supposed former publication of mine. I cannot be sworn to make correct answers as to all the literary or other follies of my nonage, and I earnestly recommend you not to brush away the dust that may have gathered over them. Whatever might do me credit you may be pretty sure I should be ready enough to bring forward. Anything else it is our mutual interest to conceal; and, so far from assisting your researches in that direction, I especially enjoin it on you, my dear friend, not to read any unacknowledged page that you may suppose to be mine."

The copy of *Fanshawe* in the possession of Mr. Fields was put away and jealously guarded; but others have appeared, from which the gist of the book has been

given to the world. There is one passage quoted by Hawthorne's son-in-law which has a beauty all its own and a distinctly autobiographical interest. It is as follows: "He called up the years that, even at his early age, he had spent in solitary study, in conversation with the dead, while he had scorned to mingle with the living world or to be actuated by any of its motives. Fanshawe had hitherto deemed himself unconnected with the world, unconcerned in its feelings and uninfluenced by it in any of his pursuits. In this respect he probably deceived himself. If his inmost heart could have been laid open, there would have been discovered that dream of undying fame, which, dream as it is, is more powerful than a thousand realities."

It appears that he had not yet burned the *Seven Tales*, which was their ultimate fate, when he set himself to the task of writing *Fanshawe*. The publishers had

been so undecided about the first book that Hawthorne concluded to write this continuous tale, which he hoped, alas! might have better success.

Meanwhile he seems to have determined to support himself by his pen, and he was willing to accept anything that offered. He entered into correspondence with S. G. Goodrich ("Peter Parley") and other publishers, and took advice of his friends Bridge, Pierce, and Cilley. The result seems to have been that Hawthorne did a great deal of work for very little money. The *Twice-told Tales* were begun, and some of them were printed in the annuals of the day. But the *Tales* were not issued in a volume until his friend Bridge went to Goodrich in 1836, and offered to bear the pecuniary risks himself.

This long period of twelve or fourteen years, which was the formative period, as it proved, of Hawthorne's genius, wears but a dreary aspect to us who

look upon it, and remember the natural stirrings of youth. "He was poor, he was solitary," writes Mr. James in his admirable analysis, "and he undertook to devote himself to literature in a community in which the interest in literature was yet of the smallest. . . . Of the actual aridity of that time the young man must have had a painful consciousness: he never lost the impression of it. . . . The development of Hawthorne's mind was not, however, towards sadness. I should be inclined to go still further, and say that his mind proper — his mind in so far as it was a repository of opinions and articles of faith — had no development that it is of especial importance to look into. What had a development was of his imagination, — that delicate and penetrating imagination which was always at play, always entertaining itself . . . among the shadows and substructions, the dark-based pillars and supports of our moral nature. Be-

neath this movement and ripple of his imagination, as free and spontaneous as that of the sea-surface, lay dimly his personal affections. These were solid and strong; but, according to my impression, they had the place very much to themselves. . . .

"When we think of what the conditions of intellectual life, of taste, must have been in a small New England town fifty years ago; and when we think of a young man of beautiful genius, with a love of literature and romance, of the picturesque, of style and form and color, trying to make a career for himself in the midst of them,—compassion for the young man becomes our dominant sentiment, and we see the large dry village picture in perhaps almost too hard a light. It seems to me, then, that it was, possibly, a blessing for Hawthorne that he was not expansive and inquisitive, that he lived much to himself and asked but little of his *milieu*. . . . American

life had begun to constitute itself from the foundations; it had begun to *be*, simply: it was an immeasurable distance from having begun to enjoy. I imagine there was no appreciable group of people in New England at that time proposing to itself to enjoy life: this was not an undertaking for which any provision had been made or to which any encouragement was offered. Hawthorne must have vaguely entertained some such design upon destiny; but he must have felt that his success would have to depend wholly upon his own ingenuity. I say he must have proposed to himself to enjoy, simply because he proposed to be an artist, and because this enters inevitably into the artist's scheme."

After the destruction of the *Seven Tales*, and the futile publication, as it proved, of *Fanshawe* and all his editing and minor writing, fame and some definite light upon his future looked as far away as ever. This light needed to

come in the form of sufficient response from the public to give him daily bread and a fillip to his natural spirits to keep them from sinking. His mode of life was probably the one to nourish the delicate imagination which was in him; and it is likely that in some dim way he was willing to accept it to this end.

"He seldom chose to walk in the town except at night. . . . In summer he was up shortly after sunrise, and would go down to bathe in the sea. . . . 'Grudge me not the day,' he says in "Footprints by the Seashore,' 'that has been spent in seclusion which yet was not solitude, since the great sea has been my companion.' Speaking elsewhere of one of his evening walks at this period, he writes: 'In the pure and bracing air I became all soul, and felt as if I could climb the sky and run a race along the Milky Way.'" Such a nature as Hawthorne's, drinking thus at the great fountain of eternal life, silences

any thought of pity. There were sad moments of return to sublunary things, but he had seen the divine light and touched the divine hand; and to one who has known the source of man's great hope the world is never quite the same as it would appear to be to other men.

But Hawthorne was to become an author and to bring his secret light into other minds. For this purpose he was eager to make careful studies of external things. His journals, the portion called later his *American Note-books*, begin at this time, and are filled with minute observations. They seldom refer to his own feelings or emotions or history. They remind one rather of a painter's sketch-book, or they are like the memoranda a poet might make if he chose to write down suggestions to illustrate by the things of earth some story of the unseen. Yet they are again unlike these, for they are prepared with infinite care

in the expression. Longfellow wrote in his own journal respecting them: "Read Hawthorne's *Note-books*. If they had been prepared for printing, they would hardly have been better."

Meanwhile, although Hawthorne shunned the fashionable and even the kindly and intelligent society about him, being in no spirit of give and take, he sometimes went to the seaside tavern, and sat among the fisher people and listened to their talk. He always loved opportunities of listening to the plain talk of plain men.

He not infrequently made short journeys,— once with his uncle, Samuel Manning, through a part of the Connecticut Valley, where he seems to have found the groundwork for his "Seven Vagabonds." He founds his claims to be of their society upon "the free mind that preferred its own folly to another's wisdom; the open spirit that found companions everywhere; above all, the rest-

less impulse that had so often made me wretched in the midst of enjoyments." One by one his little masterpieces which were to make the volumes of the *Twice-told Tales* were written, and either laid aside or sent to some *Annual* or *Token*.

Hawthorne's biographers have made careful studies of the various experiences from which his stories grew. The sensitive condition of his mind, quickened by his recluse habits, allowed him to receive impressions on every hand. One of the saddest seems to have been the death of his college friend, Cilley, who was killed in a duel with Wise. It appears that Hawthorne had challenged a young man and a friend in Salem a short time before, the cause being some false representations made by a pretty young woman, a mutual acquaintance. Hawthorne's friend laughed at the idea of a duel, and explained the false character of the girl.

But Cilley knew of Hawthorne's readiness to fight, and, when a real cause presented itself, speedily accepted the challenge of Wise, "in order to put down the tyranny of fire-eating Southerners." The result was that Cilley was slain. Hawthorne was crushed by the idea that his bad example had misled his friend; and, in the brief tale called "Fancy's Show-box: A Morality," he embodies something of the suffering that was really his.

There were few signs of immaturity in Hawthorne's work from the time he began to write the *Twice-told Tales*. The suffering of deferred hope, the constant struggle to make evident the spirit that was in him, had already given steadiness to his hand. Now and then a confidence creeps into the *Note-book*: "Every individual has a place in the world, and is important to it in some respects, whether he chooses to be so or not."

His strange manner of life colored all things. "He had little communication," writes Mr. Lathrop, "with even the members of his family. Frequently his meals were brought and left at his locked door, and it was not often that the four inmates of the old Union Street mansion met in family circle. . . . Hawthorne once said, 'We do not even live at our house.'"

The fact that Hawthorne published much at this time under fictitious names served to keep him still further within the shadow. Writing over the signature of "Oberon," he said: "You cannot conceive what an effect the composition of these tales has had upon me. I have become ambitious of a bauble, and careless of solid reputation. I am surrounding myself with shadows, which bewilder me by aping the realities of life. They have drawn me aside from the beaten path of the world, and led me into a strange sort of solitude, . . .

where nobody wishes for what I do, nor thinks nor feels as I do." The wonder is that Hawthorne's mind could so often and so airily soar above the shadows that at this time hung about him. All that he could yet do for himself was to preserve a certain repose and harmony in the midst of uncertainty and delay; and for this he formed four wise precepts,—"to break off customs, to shake off spirits ill-disposed, to meditate on youth, to do nothing against one's genius." Thus he kept himself fresh and flexible, hopeful, ready for emergency.

II.

THE help of Mr. Bridge in printing the first volume of the *Tales* was like the first streak of dawn in Hawthorne's day. It was before then, however, that Miss Elizabeth Peabody presented herself at the door of the Hawthorne home, and asked to see Miss Hawthorne. It appears she had read everything that Hawthorne had written, and even discovered his hand under his fictitious signatures. Indeed, Miss Peabody had gone so far as to make a resolve to write to the author when she first read "The Gentle Boy." But it was not easy to discover him; and, when at last she was told it was "Mr. Hathorne," as the name was then commonly called, she concluded it must be Miss Hawthorne, as she did not remember having seen a brother. On the strength of this information, she called at the house, and asked to

see Miss Hawthorne; but, when only Miss Louisa presented herself, Miss Peabody devoted the powers of her eloquence to telling her what a genius her sister possessed. "My brother, you mean," was the response.

"It *is* your brother, then!" said Miss Peabody. "If your brother can write like that, he has no right to be idle."

"My brother never is idle," answered Miss Louisa, quietly.

"Thus began an acquaintance," continues the biographer, "which helped to free Hawthorne from the spell of solitude, and led directly to the richest experience of his life."

Some months passed, and there was no sequel to this call. But early in 1837 a prettily bound copy of *Twice-told Tales* came to Miss Peabody; and she soon afterwards had some correspondence with Hawthorne, in order to engage him for the *Democratic Review*,

which was about to be started. She also invited him to come with his two sisters to pass the evening. To her astonishment, they all came; and, when Miss Peabody opened the door herself, expecting to see a shy youth, a noble-looking man, with a face expressive of stern determination, stood between his two sisters. "His hostess brought out Flaxman's designs for Dante, just received from Professor Felton, of Harvard; and the party made an evening's entertainment out of them." Miss Peabody wrote of this evening: "Sophia, who was an invalid, was in her chamber. As soon as I could, I ran upstairs to her, and said: 'O Sophia, you must get up and dress and come down! The Hawthornes are here, and you never saw anything so splendid as he is! He is handsomer than Lord Byron!' She laughed, but refused to come, remarking that, since he had called once, he would call again. . . .

Mr. Hawthorne looked at first almost fierce, with his determination not to betray his sensitive shyness, which he always recognized as a weakness. . . . He did call again, as Sophia had predicted, not long afterwards; and this time she came down, in her simple white wrapper; and sat on the sofa. As I said, 'My sister, Sophia,' he rose and looked at her intently: he did not realize how intently. As we went on talking, she would frequently interpose a remark, in her low, sweet voice. Every time she did so he would look at her again, with the same piercing, indrawing gaze. I was struck with it, and thought, 'What if he should fall in love with her!' And the thought troubled me; for she had often told me that nothing would ever tempt her to marry, and inflict on a husband the care of an invalid. When Mr. Hawthorne got up to go, he said he should come for me in the evening to call on

his sisters; and he added, 'Miss Sophia, won't you come, too?' But she replied, 'I never go out in the evening, Mr. Hawthorne.' 'I wish you would,' he said, in a low, urgent tone. But she smiled and shook her head, and he went away."

"It may be remarked here," writes his son, "that Mrs. Hawthorne, in telling her children, many years afterwards, of these first meetings with their father, used to say that his presence from the very beginning exercised so strong a magnetic attraction upon her that, instinctively and in self-defence, as it were, she drew back and repelled him. The power which she felt in him alarmed her: she did not understand what it meant, and was only able to feel that she must resist. By degrees, however, her resistance was overcome; and in the end she realized that they had loved each other at first sight." Miss Peabody says that Hawthorne once

told her at this period that his sisters lived so completely out of the world that they hardly knew its customs, but that his sister Elizabeth was very witty and original, and knew the world remarkably well in one sense, seeing that she learned it only through books. She stayed in her den, and he in his. "I have scarcely seen her in three months," he added. "After tea my mother and Louisa come down and sit with me in the little parlor; but both Elizabeth and my mother take their meals in their rooms, and my mother has eaten alone ever since my father's death."

"Whenever, after this, Mr. Hawthorne called at our house," continues Miss Peabody, "he generally saw Sophia. One day she showed him her illustration of 'The Gentle Boy,' saying, 'I want to know if this looks like your Ilbrahim?' He sat down and looked at it, then looked up and said, 'He will never look otherwise to me.'

. . . A year later he wrote to me, 'Sophia is a flower to be worn in no man's bosom, but was lent from heaven, to show the possibilities of the human soul.'"

Evidently from this moment Hawthorne was very much in love; but it was not until his thirty-fifth year that he became engaged, about two years after their first acquaintance. Miss Elizabeth Peabody having left Salem, the course of Hawthorne's intimacy with his future wife ran on naturally enough. Hawthorne's mother and sisters became very fond of her. She went frequently to their house, and by small attentions tried to win them away from their former habits of life. "Madame Hawthorne," wrote Elizabeth Peabody, "always looked as if she had walked out of an old picture, with her antique costume and a face of lovely sensibility and brightness; for she did not *seem* at all a victim of morbid sensibility, notwith-

standing her all but Hindoo self-devotion to the manes of her husband. . . . Mr. Hawthorne used to say that he inherited the granite that was in him from the paternal side, which contrasted strongly with the Manning sensibility."

Hawthorne did not marry until 1842, three or nearly four years after his engagement. It appears that his sisters fancied that Sophia's invalidism made any change of this kind impossible, and persuaded their brother of the evil effect it would have upon his mother. "Indeed," writes their son, "Hawthorne himself, and Sophia not less than he, felt the weight of the pathological objection; and Sophia consented to let the engagement continue only upon the stipulation that their marriage was to be strictly contingent upon her own recovery from her twenty years' illness. 'If God intends us to marry,' she said to him, 'He will let me be cured; if not, it will be a sign that it is not best.'

The likelihood of a cure taking place certainly did not seem great: in fact, it would be little less than a miracle. Miracle or not, however, the cure was actually accomplished; and the lovers were justified in believing that Love himself was the physician. When Sophia Peabody became Sophia Hawthorne, in 1842, she was, for the first time since her infancy, in perfect health; nor did she ever afterwards relapse into her previous condition of invalidism."

At this time, evidently, Hawthorne felt the need of planting his feet more firmly upon the solid earth. He therefore accepted, without more indecision than was natural to a man whose occupations were of a different character, the post of weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom-house on a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year. The position came to him through the influence of his Democratic friends. President Van Buren had been two

years in office; and Mr. Bancroft, the historian, was collector of the port for Boston. The Democratic party was interested to help the literary men for whom literature itself was really no support, and they gladly called Hawthorne to such place as they had to bestow until there should be a change in the administration two years later. He said, however, just before entering the collector's office he noticed a man leaving it who wore a very dejected air; and, connecting this with the change in his own appointment (the first proposition having been to give Hawthorne a much smaller place), he imagined this person to be the just-ejected weigher. Later he said: "I don't believe in rotation in office. It is not good for the human being."

He wrote to Longfellow: "I have no reason to doubt my capacity to fill the duties, for I don't know what they are. They tell me that a considerable portion of my time will be unoccupied, the

which I mean to employ in sketches of my new experience under some such titles as follows: 'Scenes in Dock,' 'Voyages at Anchor,' 'Nibblings of a Wharf Rat,' 'Trials of a Tide-waiter,' 'Romance of the Revenue service,' together with an ethical work in two volumes, on the subject of 'Duties,' the first volume to treat of moral and religious duties, and the second of duties imposed by the Revenue Laws, which I begin to consider the most important class." The irony in this note brings back with strange vividness the personality of Hawthorne as he was in the world of men and women. It was the form his talk was apt to take, his wit being pervaded with this quality. The joyousness which expresses itself in humor was not his.

But he was at this moment determined to face a life of activity. "I want to have something to do with the material world," he said to a friend: "if I could

only make tables, I should feel myself more of a man." There is something pathetic beyond expression in this outburst, which betrays the result of his unnatural seclusion. Hawthorne knew he was a writer, but his very slight recognition from Americans of that period flung him back too rudely upon himself. Longfellow had administered true consolation (as he did so often, let us remember) by writing the most important review, probably, of the *Twice-told Tales*,— certainly, the one which gave the greatest pleasure to Hawthorne. In his first letter to Longfellow, presenting a copy of his book, Hawthorne speaks as if he had seen or heard very little of Longfellow since their college days. "We were not, it is true, so well acquainted at college that I can plead an absolute right to inflict my 'twice-told' tediousness upon you; but I have often regretted we were not better known to each other, and have

been glad of your success in literature and in more important matters." After what Hawthorne calls a "kind and cordial" reply to his letter, he writes again at greater length: "It gratifies me that you have occasionally felt an interest in my situation; but your quotation from Jean Paul, about the 'lark's nest,' makes me smile. You would have been much nearer the truth if you had pictured me as dwelling in an owl's nest,—for mine is about as dismal; and, like the owl, I seldom venture abroad till after dusk. By some witchcraft or other—for I really cannot assign any reasonable why or wherefore—I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again. Since we last met, which you remember was in Sawtell's room, where you read a farewell poem to the relics of the class,—ever since that time I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort

of life I was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself, and put me into a dungeon; and now I cannot find the key to let myself out, and, if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out. You tell me you have met with troubles and changes. I know not what these may have been; but I can assure you that trouble is the next best thing to enjoyment, and that there is no fate in this world so horrible as to have no share in either its joys or sorrows. For the last ten years I have not lived, but only dreamed of living. It may be true that there have been some unsubstantial pleasures here in the shade, which I might have missed in the sunshine; but you cannot conceive how utterly devoid of satisfaction all my retrospects are. . . . If my writings had made any decided impression, I should have been stimulated to greater exertions; but there has been no warmth of approbation, so that I have always written with benumbed fingers.

I have another great difficulty in the lack of materials; for I have seen so little of the world that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my stories of. Sometimes, through a peep-hole, I have caught a glimpse of the real world; and the two or three articles in which I have portrayed these glimpses please me better than the others.

"I have now, or shall soon have, a sharper spur to exertion, which I lacked at an earlier period; for I see little prospect but that I shall have to scribble for a living. But this troubles me much less than you would suppose. I can turn my pen to all sorts of drudgery, such as children's books, etc.; and by and by I shall get some editorship that will answer my purpose. Frank Pierce, who was with us at college, offered me his influence to obtain an office in the exploring expedition [Commodore Wilkes's]; but I believe he was mistaken in supposing that a vacancy existed."

These letters to Longfellow show a perfect frankness, and allow us a better glimpse of the situation than we find elsewhere. He was to join no delightful "exploring expedition," but was to face a life of drudgery for the first and only time in his existence, if we may except his laborious days at Brook Farm; but these were so fanned by nature's breezes and relieved by society that labor, on the whole, wore a different face. His desire to see the laboring world and to share its duties was not unnatural for one possessed of manly vigor, who had found himself so nearly disengaged from the ways of men as to be sometimes floating double, "swan and shadow," scarcely knowing the one from the other. Even Tennyson, crowned with all success, is reported once as longing to stand, for a while at least, hand to hand with the workers of the world: how much more Hawthorne, who watched the airy webs of his fancy sail

away with the clouds, leaving him hungry, solitary, and denuded!

Therefore in 1839 he accepted a position in the Boston Custom-house. "My life only is a burden," he writes, "in the same way that it is to every toilsome man. . . . But from henceforth forever I shall be entitled to call the sons of toil my brethren, and shall know how to sympathise with them, seeing that I likewise have risen at dawn and borne the fervor of the mid-day sun, nor turned my heavy footsteps homeward till eventide." "He need not always," says one of his biographers, "have made the employment so severe; but the wages of the wharf laborers depended on the number of hours they worked in a day, and Hawthorne used to make it a point in all weathers to get to the wharf at the earliest possible hour, solely for their benefit."

That was like him,—generous, accurate, unselfish. Indeed, his religious

nature struck its roots all the deeper because they were in the dark. He seldom went to church or made any further outward manifestation of his nearness to divine things than what we may discover in his life. He says in one of those love-letters written in the custom-house days during his long engagement: "Indeed, I feel somewhat afraid to hear this divine Father Taylor, lest my sympathy with your admiration of him be colder and feebler than you look for. Our souls are in happiest unison; but we must not disquiet ourselves if every tone be not reechoed from one to the other, if every slightest shade be not reflected in the alternate mirror. Our broad and general sympathy is enough to secure our bliss, without our following it into minute details. Will you promise not to be troubled, should I be unable to appreciate the excellence of Father Taylor? Promise me this; and at some

auspicious hour, which I trust will soon arrive, Father Taylor shall have an opportunity to make music with my soul. But I forewarn you, dearest, that I am a most unmalleable man. You are not to suppose, because my spirit answers to every touch of yours, that therefore every breeze or even every whirlwind can upturn me from my depths."

There is a letter of this period giving an unvarnished picture of his occupation in a business so little suited to him. "I have been measuring coal all day," he writes during the winter of 1840, "on board of a black little British schooner in a dismal dock at the north end of the city. Most of the time I paced the deck to keep myself warm; for the wind (north-east, I believe) blew up through the dock as if it had been the pipe of a pair of bellows. The vessel lying deep between two wharves, there was no more delightful prospect on the right hand and on the left than the posts and tim-

bers half immersed in the water and covered with ice, which the rising and falling of successive tides had left upon them, so that they looked like immense icicles. Across the water, however, not more than half a mile off, appeared the Bunker's Hill Monument and, what interested me considerably more, a church steeple with the dial of a clock upon it, whereby I was enabled to measure the march of the weary hours. Sometimes I descended into the dirty little cabin of the schooner, and warmed myself by a red-hot stove, among biscuit-barrels, pots and kettles, sea-chests, and innumerable lumber of all sorts, my olfactories meanwhile being greatly refreshed with the odour of a pipe which the captain or some one of his crew was smoking. But at last came the sunset, with delicate clouds and a purple light upon the islands; and I blessed it, because it was the signal of my release." "A worse man than Hawthorne," says Mr. James,

"would have measured coal quite as well; and, of all the dismal tasks to which an unremunerated imagination has ever had to accommodate itself, I remember none more sordid." A little later Hawthorne writes further on this same topic: "I pray that in one year more I may find some way of escaping from this unblest custom-house, for it is a very grievous thraldom. I do detest all offices,—all, at least, that are held on a political tenure; and I want nothing to do with politicians. Their hearts wither away and die out of their bodies. Their consciences are turned to India-rubber, or to some substance as black as that and which will stretch as much. One thing, if no more, I have gained by my custom-house experience,—to know a politician. It is a knowledge which no previous thought nor power of sympathy could have taught me, because the animal—or the machine, rather—is not in nature."

Again, a few days later he continued in another letter: "I do not think it is the doom laid upon me of murdering so many of the brightest hours of the day at the custom-house that makes such havoc with my wits; for here I am again trying to write worthily, . . . yet with a sense as if all the noblest part of man had been left out of my composition or had decayed out of it since my nature was given to my own keeping. . . . Never comes any bird of paradise into that dismal region. A salt or even a coal ship is ten million times preferable, for there the sky is above me and the fresh breeze around me; and my thoughts, having hardly anything to do with my occupation, are as free as air. . . . It is only once in a while that the image and desire of a better and happier life makes me feel the iron of my chain; for, after all, a human spirit may find no insufficiency of food for it, even in the custom-house.

And, with such materials as these, I do think and feel and learn things that are worth knowing, and which I should not know unless I had learned them there. So that the present position of my life shall not be quite left out of the sum of my real existence. . . . It is good for me, on many accounts, that my life has had this passage in it. I know much more than I did a year ago. I have a stronger sense of power to act as a man among men. I have gained worldly wisdom,—and wisdom, also, that is not altogether of this world. And, when I quit this earthly career where I am now buried, nothing will cling to me that ought to be left behind. Men will not perceive, I trust, by my look or the tenor of my thoughts and feelings, that I have been a custom-house officer. . . . When I shall be free again, I will enjoy all things with the fresh simplicity of a child of five years old."

To Sophia he wrote: "Six or seven

hours of cheerful solitude! But I will not be alone. I invite your spirit to be with me,—at any hour and as many hours as you please,—but especially at the twilight hour, before I light my lamp. I bid you at that particular time, because I can see visions more vividly in the dusky glow of firelight than either by daylight or lamplight. Come, and let me renew my spell against headache and other direful effects of the east wind. How I wish I could give you a portion of my insensibility! and yet I should be almost afraid of some radical transformation, were I to produce a change in that respect. If you cannot grow plump and rosy and tough and vigorous without being changed into another nature, then I do think, for this short life, you had better remain just what you are. Yes; but you will be the same to me, because we have met in eternity, and there our intimacy was formed. . . . I never till now had a friend who could give me

repose. . . . But peace overflows from your heart into mine."

Again he writes to her: "I have a mind some day to send you a journal of all my doings and sufferings, my whole external life, from the time I awake at dawn till I close my eyes at night. What a dry, dull history would it be! But then, apart from this, I would write another journal of my inward life throughout the same day,—my fits of pleasant thought, and those likewise which are shadowed by passing clouds, —the desires of my heart towards you,— my pictures of what we are to enjoy together. Nobody would think that the same man could live two such different lives simultaneously. But, then, the grosser life is a dream and the spiritual life is a reality."

And in another letter he says: "I have met with an immense misfortune. Do you sympathise from the bottom of your heart? . . . Now art thou all in

a fever of anxiety? Shall I tell thee? No; yes, I will. I have received an invitation to a party at General McNeil's next Friday evening. Why will not people let poor persecuted me alone? What possible good can it do for me to thrust my coal-begrimed visage and salt-befrosted locks into good society? What claim have I to be there,—a humble measurer, a subordinate custom-house officer, as I am? I cannot go; I will not go. I intend to pass that evening with you,—that is, in musing and dreaming of you; and, moreover, considering that we love each other, methinks it is an exceeding breach of etiquette that you were not invited. How strange it is, tender and fragile little Sophie, that your protection should have become absolutely necessary to such a great, rough, burly, broad-shouldered personage as I! I need your support as much as you need mine."

Again he exclaims: "What a letter!

Never was so much beauty poured out of any heart before; and to read it over and over is like bathing my brow in a fresh fountain and drinking draughts that renew the life within me. . . . How can you say that I have ever written anything beautiful, being yourself so potent to reproduce whatever is loveliest? If I did not know that you loved me, I should even be ashamed before you. Worthy of you I am not; but you will make me so, for there will be time or eternity enough for your blessed influence to work on me."

"BOSTON, July 10, 1840.

"Dearest,—My days have been so busy and my evenings so invaded with visitants that I have not had a moment's time to talk with you. Scarcely till this morning have I been able to read your letter quietly. Night before last came Mr. ——; and you know he is somewhat unconscionable as to the length

of his calls. The next afternoon came Mr. ——'s London brother, and wasted my precious hours with a dull talk of nothing; and in the evening I was sorely tried with Mr. —— and a Cambridge law student, who came to do homage to my literary renown. So you were put aside for those idle people. I do wish the blockheads and all other blockheads in this world could comprehend how inestimable are the quiet hours of a busy man, especially when that man has no native impulse to keep him busy, but is continually forced to battle with his own nature, which yearns for seclusion (the solitude of a united two) and freedom to think and dream and feel." . . .

"Boston, October, 1840.

. . . "Sometimes during my solitary life in our old Salem house it seemed to me I had only life enough to know that I was not alive; for I had no wife then to keep my heart warm. But, at length,

you were revealed to me, in the shadow of a seclusion as deep as my own. I drew nearer and nearer to you, and opened my heart to you; and you came to me, and will remain forever, keeping my heart warm and renewing my life with your own." . . .

"SALEM, November, 1840.

"Whenever I return to Salem, I feel how dark my life would be without the light that you shed upon it,—how cold without the warmth of your love. Sitting in this chamber where my youth wasted itself in vain, I can partly estimate the change that has been wrought. It seems as if the better part of me had been born since then. I had walked those many years in darkness, and might so have walked through life, with only a dreamy notion that there was any light in the universe, if you had not kissed my eyelids and given me to see. . . . You live ten times as much as I,

because your spirit takes so much more note of things."

III.

HAWTHORNE'S removal from the custom-house came promptly with the change of administration, when his two years of service were over, although Bancroft told Emerson that Hawthorne was the most efficient and the best of the custom-house officers. It cannot be said that either he or Sophia regretted this, although for the moment it seemed to put away still farther the prospect of their marriage; but this was only for a moment. Mr. Ripley was at this juncture beginning the experiment at Brook Farm; and Hawthorne nourished the fancy that a home for his wife and himself could be planted there. "It seems odd," as Mr. Lathrop says, "that the least gregarious of men should have been drawn into a socialistic community;" but, as we have seen, he had a practical end in view. Besides, as Mr. James so admirably continues, "it

is only fair to believe that Hawthorne was interested in the experiment; and, though he was not a Transcendentalist, an Abolitionist, or a Fourierite, as his companions in some degree or other were likely to be, he was willing, as a generous and unoccupied young man, to lend a hand in any reasonable scheme for helping people to live together on better terms than the common. . . . The main characteristic of the community was that each individual concerned in it should do a part of the work necessary for keeping the whole machine going."

Furthermore, Hawthorne as a writer could not have been blind to the fact that he should see some persons of character at close range, and be enabled, in the future, to make use of his experience. Whether he made this clear to himself or not, his stay at Brook Farm becomes a period of special importance in his life, as furnishing mate-

rial for one of his three great American novels, *The Blithedale Romance*. Mr. James says of his heroine: "Zenobia is, to my sense, his only definite attempt at the representation of a character. The portrait is full of alteration and embellishment, but it has a greater reality, a greater abundance of detail, than any of his other figures; and the reality was a memory of a lady whom he had encountered in the Roxbury pastoral or among the wood-walks of Concord, with strange books in her hand and eloquent discourse on her lips. *The Blithedale Romance* was written just after her unhappy death, when the reverberation of her talk would lose much of its harshness. In fact, however, very much the same qualities that made Hawthorne a Democrat in politics — his contemplative turn, . . . his taste for old ideals and loitering paces and muffled tones — would operate to keep him out of actual sympathy with a woman of the so-called progressive type.

We may be sure that his taste in women was conservative."

Hawthorne wrote to his sister in May, after a few weeks' residence at Brook Farm: "As the weather precludes all possibility of ploughing, hoeing, sowing, and other such operations, I bethink me that you may have no objections to hear something of my whereabout and what-about. You are to know, then, that I took up my abode here on the 12th ultimo, in the midst of a snow-storm which kept us all idle for a day or two. At the first glimpse of fair weather Mr. Ripley summoned us into the cow-yard, and introduced me to an instrument with four prongs, commonly entitled a dung-fork. With this tool I have already assisted to load twenty or thirty carts of manure, and I shall take part in loading nearly three hundred more. Besides, I have planted potatoes and pease, cut straw and hay for the cattle, and done various other mighty works. . . . The

weather has been so unfavorable that we have worked comparatively little in the fields; but, nevertheless, I have gained strength wonderfully,—grown quite a giant, in fact,—and can do a day's work without the slightest inconvenience. In short, I am transformed into a complete farmer.

"This is one of the most beautiful places I ever saw in my life, and as secluded as if it were a hundred miles from any city or village. There are woods in which we can ramble all day without meeting anybody or scarcely seeing a house. Our house stands apart from the main road, so that we are not troubled even with passengers looking at us. Once in a while we have a Transcendental visitor, such as Mr. Alcott; but, generally, we pass whole days without seeing a single face save those of the brethren."

Among the residents at Brook Farm during Hawthorne's stay and afterwards

were George P. Bradford, the Rev. Warren Burton, and Frank Farley, whom Hawthorne saw most frequently; also Charles Dana, Pratt, the young Brownson, Horace Sumner (a younger brother of Charles), George William Curtis and his brother Burrill Curtis.

"The whole fraternity," he continues, "eat together; and such a delectable way of life has never been seen on earth since the days of the early Christians. We get up at half-past four, breakfast at half-past six, dine at half-past twelve, and go to bed at nine." He signs himself "Nath. Hawthorne, ploughman."

The Peabody family having moved to West Street, Boston, Hawthorne's letters to his future wife are addressed to her there.

"It seems as if all evil things had more power over you when I am away. Then you are exposed to noxious winds and to pestilence and to death-like weariness; and, moreover, nobody knows how

to take care of you but me. Everybody else thinks it of importance that you should paint and sculpture, but it would be no trouble to me if you should never touch clay or canvas again. It is not what you do, but what you are, that I concern myself about. And, if your mighty works are to be wrought only by the anguish of your head and weariness of your frame and sinking of your heart, then do I never desire to see another."

"Brook Farm, Aug. 22, 1841.

"When am I to see you again? The first of September comes a week from Tuesday next, but I think I shall compel it to begin on Sunday. Will you consent? Then on Saturday afternoon I will come to you, and remain in the city till Monday. Thence I shall go to Salem and spend a week there, longer or shorter, according to the intensity of the occasion for my presence. I do long to

see our mother and sisters, and I should not wonder if they felt some slight desire to see me." . . .

"SALEM, Sept. 8, 1841.

. . . "I feel moved to write, though the haze and sleepiness which always settle upon me here will be perceptible in every line. But what a letter you wrote to me! It is like one angel writing to another angel. But, alas! the letter has miscarried, and has been delivered to a most unworthy mortal."

"I have been out only once in the daytime since my arrival. How immediately and irrecoverably (if you did not keep me out of the abyss) should I relapse into the way of life in which I spent my youth! If it were not for you, this present world would see no more of me forever. The sunshine would never fall on me no more than on a ghost. Once in a while people might discern my figure gliding stealthily through the

dim evening,— that would be all. I should be only a shadow of the night. It is you that give me reality and make all things real for me. If, in the interval since I quitted this lonely old chamber, I had found no woman (and you were the only possible one) to impart reality and significance to life, I should have come back hither ere now with a feeling that all was a dream and a mockery." . . .

The following winter was also passed at Brook Farm. Hawthorne was no fair-weather friend. He was to give life at the community a true trial. Perhaps this last winter of his single life could not have been passed under better auspices. It gave him opportunity to frame the plan of his future existence, and to be measurably sure that he felt the ground under his feet. He was often found in the autumnal hours of musing leisure stretched upon some open hill-

side; and once he writes, "Oh, the beauty of grassy slopes and the hollow ways of paths winding between hills, and the intervals between the road and wood-lots, where summer lingers and sits down, strewing gold and blue asters as her parting gifts and memorials!"

He wrote afterwards in *The Blithedale Romance*, "I found myself looking forward to years, if not to a lifetime, to be spent on the same system;" and this, says Mr. Lathrop, was, in fact, his attitude. A little time before his marriage he still contemplated buying a house-site there for his permanent abode, but he came to an adverse decision.

IV.

Up to the period of his marriage, in 1842, when Hawthorne was thirty-eight years old, his life may be said to have passed in seclusion. We need scarcely except the months spent at Brook Farm,— an experiment of living which now occupies a sufficiently prominent place in the written history of that time, although nearly unknown to the New England people in general while it existed, and heard of rarely, even in Boston, except among the "come-outers."

At the end of the second year of his labors at Brook Farm, Hawthorne broke his connection there, leaving the one thousand dollars behind him which he had hopefully invested in the community, and going nearly empty-handed, but with some confidence in the future of his literary career, to Boston, whence he wrote to Sophia: —

"May 27, 1842.

"Dearest Heart,— Your letter to my sisters was most beautiful,— sweet, gentle, and magnanimous; such as no one but you could have written. If they do not love you, it must be because they have no hearts to love with; and, even if this were the case, I should not despair of your planting the seeds of hearts in their bosoms. . . . I saw Mr. Emerson at the Athenæum yesterday and he tells me that our garden, etc., makes progress."

Evidently, it had been decided that Sophia should herself open the question of immediate marriage to the mother and sisters, before Hawthorne should see them.

He writes again, June 9, from Salem:

"Scarcely had I arrived here, when our mother came out of her chamber, looking better and more cheerful than I have seen her this some time, and inquired about your health and well-being,

very kindly, too. Then was my heart much lightened; for I know that almost every agitating circumstance of her life had hitherto cost her a fit of sickness, and I knew not but it might be so now. Foolish me, to doubt that my mother's love could be wise, like all other genuine love! And foolish again to have doubted your instinct,—whom, henceforth (if never before), I take for my unerring guide and counsellor in all matters of the heart and soul. . . . We can already measure the interval by days and hours. What happiness! and what awe is intermingled with it!—no fear nor doubt, but a holy awe, as when an immortal spirit is drawing near to the gates of Heaven." . . .

On the 9th of July the ceremony was performed by the Rev. James Freeman Clarke at the house of Miss Peabody's parents in Boston. By a strange fortune, Mr. Clarke never saw them again until Hawthorne lay in his last sleep.

The married lovers went at once to their own home in the Old Manse in Concord, where they passed nearly four blissful years. It cost little to live in those days, in the country; and Hawthorne wrote and published busily. He contributed constantly to the *Democratic Review*, and published *Mosses from an Old Manse*, besides editing the *African Journals* of his friend Bridge and making a second volume of the *Twice-told Tales*.

Now "being happy," as he writes of himself, Hawthorne was really able to work. Perhaps *The Scarlet Letter* was also conceived at this period; but more than ever men have wondered at the thread of sad imaginings which colored the work of this "happy" man. His own introduction to the *Mosses* describing the "Old Manse" has the fine veil drawn over it which so often clothes the English landscape and the heart which has known sorrow. "It was here," he writes, "that Emerson wrote

Nature; for he was then an inhabitant of the Manse, and used to watch the Assyrian dawn and Paphian sunset and moonrise from the summit of our eastern hill. When I first saw the room, its walls were blackened with the smoke of unnumbered years, and made still blacker by the grim prints of Puritan ministers that hung around. . . . The rain pattered upon the roof and the sky gloomed through the dusty garret windows while I burrowed among the venerable books in search of any living thought. . . . So long as an unlettered soul can attain to saving grace, there would seem to be no deadly error in holding theological libraries to be accumulations of, for the most part, stupendous impertinence. . . . Genius indeed melts many pages into one, and thus effects something permanent. . . . A work of genius is but the newspaper of a century, or perhaps of a hundred centuries."

And thus he rambles on, chiefly out of

doors indeed, leaving the reader to feel, between the lines, the calm ~~which~~ joy that can spread over the poetic spirit.

Mrs. Hawthorne wrote during this idyllic period: "We had a most enchanting time during Mary the cook's holiday sojourn in Boston. We remained in our bower undisturbed by mortal creature. Mr. Hawthorne took the new phasis of housekeeper, and, with that marvellous power of adaptation to circumstances that he possesses, made everything go easily and well. He rose betimes in the mornings and kindled fires in the kitchen and breakfast room, and by the time I came down the tea-kettle boiled and potatoes were baked and rice cooked, and my lord sat with a book superintending." . . .

"April 4, 1844.

"My dearest Mother,—*I have no time*, as you may imagine. I am baby's tire-woman, hand-maiden, and tender, as

well as nursing mother. My husband relieves me with her constantly, and gets her to sleep beautifully. . . . The other day, when my husband saw me contemplating an appalling vacuum in his dressing-gown, he said he was a man of the largest rents in the country and it was strange he had not more ready money. . . . But, somehow or other, I do not care much, because we are so happy. We

'Sail away
Into the regions of exceeding Day,'

and the shell of life is not of much consequence."

The prices paid Hawthorne for his work were so very small that he found it impossible any longer to support his little household of four persons, even in Concord. Again Mr. Pierce and Mr. Bridge and Mr. O'Sullivan, his three devoted friends, came to the rescue, and were able at last to get for him the

NATHANIEL

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"Never was a poor little country village infested with such a variety of queer, strangely dressed, oddly behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply bores of a very intense character."

"The whole passage," writes Henry James, "is interesting; and it suggests that little Concord had not been ill-treated by the Fates,—with 'a great original thinker' at one end of the village, an exquisite teller of tales at the other, and the rows of New England elms between."

Of Emerson, Hawthorne wrote: "Being happy, I felt as if there were no question to put; and I therefore admired him as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher. It was good, nevertheless, to meet him in the wood-paths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused

about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he, so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart. And, in truth, the heart of many an ordinary man had, perchance, inscriptions which he could not read. But it was impossible to dwell in his vicinity without inhaling more or less the atmosphere of his lofty thought."

But the moment arrived when this beautiful episode must come to an end; and as such changes, however painful, usually have at the moment large alleviations, so the pressure of daily need, which Mrs. Hawthorne had no capability to relieve, made the way seem easy for returning with a fixed income to his mother's house in Salem. He went thither, once before the removal, alone, and passed a fortnight,—writing in his journal: "I resumed all my bachelor habits, leading the same life in which

ten years of my youth flitted away like a dream. But how much changed was I! At last I had got hold of a reality which could never be taken from me. It was good thus to get apart from my happiness for the sake of contemplating it."

This capacity for "getting apart" from his own heart and life is the key to the sombre quality of his genius. It is impossible not to quote here the words of Mr. James, because he has finally analyzed this question: —

"Our writer's imagination," he says, "as has been abundantly conceded, was a gloomy one. The old Puritan sense of sin, of penalties to be paid, of the darkness and wickedness of life, had passed into it. It had not passed into the parts of Hawthorne's nature corresponding to those occupied by the same horrible vision of things in his ancestors. But it had still been determined to claim this later comer as its own; and, since his

heart and his happiness were to escape, it insisted upon setting its mark upon his genius,— upon his most beautiful organ, his admirable fancy. . . . The duskiest flowers of his invention sprang straight from the soil of his happiest days. . . . When he was lightest of heart, he was most creative; and, when he was most creative, the moral picturesqueness of the old secret of mankind in general, and of the Puritans in particular, most appealed to him."

I find myself still lingering over the life at the Old Manse, where happiness was tasted in its perfect pureness, knowing well that all such experience belongs really to the long future, to the bright eternity in which they both firmly believed. Practically, they were but poorly furnished against the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." Knowing little of the conditions of the larger world, Mrs. Hawthorne was easily led to consider men other than they were, and

Hawthorne to withdraw himself into a deeper mood of taciturnity and endurance. For the moment, during three or four happy years, their solitude and their happiness remained complete. Nor was their married joy less at any period, but the cares of life weighed more heavily upon shoulders little fitted to bear them.

V.

THE four years at the Old Manse were succeeded by four years in Salem, with the exception of a few months passed in Boston, where their son Julian was born. Besides the house in Boston, they occupied three successive houses in Salem during this time, at last settling themselves in Mall Street, where Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, or finished it, and later *The Snow Image, and Other Tales*. Of this new house, Mrs. Hawthorne wrote to her mother: "How glad you will be, dear mother, to hear that we are to have the Mall Street house, and for two hundred dollars! . . . The children will have a grand race-course on rainy days from the end of the chamber to the end of the pantry. My husband's study will be high from all noise, and it will be to me a Paradise of Peace to think of him alone and still yet within my reach. He has now lived in the nursery a year

without a chance for one hour's uninterrupted musing, and without his desk being once opened! He — the heaven-gifted seer — to spend his life between the custom-house and the nursery! . . . It will be very pleasant to have Madame Hawthorne in the house. Her suite of rooms is wholly distinct from ours, so that we shall only meet when we choose to do so. There are very few people in the world whom I should like or would consent to have in the house even in this way; but Madame Hawthorne is so uninterfering, of so much delicacy, that I shall never know she is near excepting when I wish it. And she has so much kindness and sense and spirit that she will be a great resource in emergencies. Elizabeth is an invisible entity. I have seen her but once in two years, and Louisa never intrudes. . . . It is no small satisfaction to know that Mrs. Hawthorne's remainder of life will be glorified by the presence of these children

and of her own son. I am so glad to win her out of that Castle Dismal and from the mysterious chambers into which no mortal ever peeped till Una was born and Julian; for they alone have entered the penetralia. Into that chamber the sun never shines. Into these rooms in Mall Street it blazes without stint."

In the winter of 1849, after the death of Hawthorne's mother, described most startlingly with the strange, bare truthfulness so peculiar to him in his journal, Mr. Fields, hearing that Hawthorne was not well and was to be again ejected from the custom-house,—if, indeed, that event had not already taken place,—went to Salem, hoping to incite him to publish something he had in hand or to write, in order to keep his name before the public. "I found him alone," Mr. Fields said, "in a chamber over the sitting-room of the dwelling; and, as the day was cold, he was hovering near

a stove. We fell into talk about his future prospects; and he was, as I feared I should find him, in a very desponding mood. 'Now,' said I, 'is the time for you to publish; for I know during these years in Salem you must have got something ready for the press.' 'Nonsense!' said he: 'what heart had I to write anything, when my publishers, Monroe & Company, have been so many years trying to sell a small edition of the *Twice-told Tales*?' I still pressed upon him the good chances he would have now with something new. 'Who would risk publishing a book for *me*, the most unpopular writer in America?' 'I would,' said I, 'and would start with an edition of two thousand copies of anything you write.' 'What madness!' he exclaimed. 'Your friendship for me gets the better of your judgment. No, no,' he continued, 'I have no money to indemnify a publisher's losses on my account.' I looked

at my watch, and found that the train would soon be starting for Boston; and I knew there was not much time to lose in trying to discover what had been his literary work during these last few years in Salem. I remember I pressed him to reveal to me what he had been writing. He shook his head, and gave me to understand he had produced nothing. At that moment I caught sight of a bureau, or chest of drawers, near where we were sitting, and immediately it occurred to me that hidden away somewhere in that article of furniture was a story or stories by the author of the *Twice-told Tales;* and I became so positive of it that I charged him vehemently with the fact. He seemed surprised, I thought, but shook his head again. . . . I was hurrying down the stairs when he called after me from the chamber, asking me to stop a moment. Then, quickly stepping into the entry with a roll of manuscript in his hands,

he said: 'How, in Heaven's name, did you know this thing was there? As you have found me out, take what I have written and tell me, after you get home and have time to read it, if it is good for anything. It is either very good or very bad, I don't know which.' On my way up to Boston I read the germ of *The Scarlet Letter*. Before I slept that night, I wrote him a note all aglow with admiration. . . . We soon arranged for his appearance again before the public with a book. . . . It was his intention to make *The Scarlet Letter* one of several short stories, all to be included in one volume and called 'Old-time Legends'; . . . but I persuaded him, after reading the first chapters of the story, to elaborate it, and publish it as a separate work." Hawthorne wrote to Mr. Fields: "If the book is made up entirely of *The Scarlet Letter*, it will be too sombre. I found it impossible to relieve the shadows of the story with so much

light as I would gladly have thrown in. Keeping so close to the point as the tale does, and diversified no otherwise than by turning different sides of the same dark idea to the reader's eye, it will weary very many people and disgust some. Is it safe, then, to stake the fate of the book entirely on this one chance? A hunter loads his gun with a bullet and several buckshot; and, following his sagacious example, it was my purpose to conjoin the one long story with half a dozen shorter ones, so that, failing to kill the public outright with my biggest and heaviest lump of lead, I might have other chances with the smaller bits, individually and in the aggregate. However, I am willing to leave these considerations to your judgment, and should not be sorry to have you decide for the separate publication." Mr. Fields's decision on this point and his management of the business had much to do with the immediate success of the story.

Five thousand copies were sold in the first ten days, and the author was at last introduced to the large public of England and America.

Hawthorne loved and trusted his publishers, while they in turn were generous to him, though their wishes far outran anything they could do for him. He wrote to Mr. Fields in 1860: "My own opinion is that I am not really a popular writer, and that what popularity I have gained is chiefly accidental and owing to other causes than my own kind or degree of merit. Possibly I may (or may not) desire something better than popularity; but, looking at all my productions, and especially this latter one [*The Marble Faun*], with a cold or critical eye, I can see they do not make their appeal to the popular mind." This was eminently true in that day as in our own; and all the devotion of his publishers—proved by the constant reprinting of his books in varying forms, by newspaper

articles, by private letters and conversations — was needed to create the popularity he achieved. Hawthorne was neither unmindful nor inappreciative of the friendship of his publishers. He responded in the most loyal fashion, writing once to Mr. Fields: "I care more for your good opinion than for that of a host of critics, and have an excellent reason for so doing, inasmuch as my literary success, whatever it has been or may be, is the result of my connection with you. Somehow or other, you smote the rock of public sympathy in my behalf, and a stream gushed forth in sufficient quantity to quench my thirst, though not to drown me. I think no other author can ever have had a publisher that he valued so much as I do mine."

The Scarlet Letter was published in April, 1850; and in the early summer of the same year Hawthorne moved to Lenox with his family. His Introduc-

tion, called "The Custom-house," gave great offence to his contemporaries,—a fact which seems to our generation sufficiently incredible until we remember that Hawthorne was really writing to living men and women of things as they were, he being a man, after all, among men. The aloofness of his nature made it impossible for him, in the confidence with which an author converses with his public, to think of himself as really a part of the living phantasmagoria he saw about him. Neither did he love to consider himself as without the pale of human sympathies; but his sad inheritance was too much for him. He was, indeed, a man apart, and, without being conscious of the effect, described the ancient adherents of the custom-house service and the signs of decay in Salem with the terrible keenness and truth of one who had dropped there from another planet. He did not love these apparently unsympathetic qualities in himself,

and, doubtless, in hours of despondence, recalled the words of Milton in the *Areopagitica:* "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

But we must do Hawthorne justice. He was laboring under uncounted difficulties in coming to share the world's work. Bancroft, as we have seen, thought him a very superior officer; and there is a legend in Salem still that he was quite as severe as the keenest master could have desired, and, for that reason, not altogether loved by the men under him. I must confess this seems to me very high praise, and to corroborate Bancroft's appreciation, when we think of the musty condition of political offices at that period.

But such a disposition, coupled with the taciturnity of Hawthorne, could

never make him popular; and the end of the Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* has a sad and "dying fall":—

"Soon my native town will loom upon me through the haze of memory, a mist brooding over and around it, as if it were no portion of the real earth, but an overgrown village in cloud-land, with only imaginary inhabitants to people its wooden houses, and walk its homely lanes and the unpicturesque prolixity of its main street. Henceforth it ceases to be a reality of my life. I am a citizen of somewhere else. My good townspeople will not much regret me; for—though it has been as dear an object as any, in my literary efforts, to be of some importance in their eyes, and to win myself a pleasant memory in this abode and burial-place of so many of my forefathers—there has never been for me the genial atmosphere which a literary man requires, in order to ripen the best harvest of his mind."

The Scarlet Letter having brought Hawthorne the world-wide fame which holds so justly to this day, while the Introduction drew down upon him the additional dislike of his townspeople, he accepted the offer of a small cottage in Lenox, and immediately withdrew himself permanently from Salem.

To show how unconscious Hawthorne was of any expression of acerbity respecting his custom-house experiences, he writes to Mr. Fields with regard to this Introduction, "In the process of writing, all political and official turmoil has subsided within me, so that I have not felt inclined to execute justice on any of my enemies."

Of *The Scarlet Letter* itself, and the position he gained by it, Henry James says:—

"The book was the finest piece of imaginative writing yet put forth in the country. There was a consciousness of this in the welcome that was given it,—

a satisfaction in the idea of America having produced a novel that belonged to literature, and to the forefront of it."

Even in the briefest study of the life and work of Hawthorne, he must always be considered as the great romancer,—not as a man among men, who one day wrote a story. We have only to turn to Sewall's Diary, written at the period with which Hawthorne deals, to see what New England was in the eyes of the prosaic judge, who was recording events as they occurred. Although Hawthorne wrote historical sketches, biography, and autobiography, and kept his own extraordinary note-books, telling the truth from his own standpoint fearlessly, there was always, as it were, a swaying veil between him and what are called the realities of life.

The same Salem that failed to nourish his imagination, and that appeared to him so devoid of elements necessary to any true existence, was, in reality, as we

have seen, a very pretty town containing a small group of cultivated persons who were sincerely appreciative of their great writer.

Miss Burley, with her library, her wisdom, and her generosities, is still remembered; and, like Mrs. Lyman, of Northampton, and other intelligent women of other towns,—Mrs. Ripley, of Concord, being among the first,—was helping to give a new tone to the new generation. But Hawthorne felt that to subject himself to adulation on the one hand and to provincial criticism on the other would cause him to breathe an atmosphere which would stifle him in the end. Nevertheless, he possessed that inexplicable instinct which holds us to our native soil, in no common degree. His son says, "After freeing himself from Salem, he never found any permanent rest anywhere."

He was artist and romancer to the full; and, so soon as the oppressive light

of noon peered into his domain wherever he might be, he fled away again into the shadow. His daughter says, "He loved his art more than his time, more than his ease, and could thrust into the flames an armful of manuscript because he suspected the pages of weakness and exaggeration."

The year and a half passed in "the little red house" in Lenox, whither he had been hospitably beckoned, was the season of his greatest intellectual activity, following as it did his first moment of real success. He thought he found it hard to write with such a magnificent panorama of hill and lake country constantly inviting the eye; but during this time he wrote and published *The House of the Seven Gables* and *A Wonder Book for Children*, the latter being entirely written in six weeks. He wrote to Mr. Fields concerning *The House of the Seven Gables:* "I write diligently, but not so rapidly as I had hoped. I find the book

requires more care and thought than *The Scarlet Letter;* also, I have to wait oftener for a mood." After sending the manuscript, he says: "If you do not receive it, you may conclude that it has miscarried, in which case I shall not consent to the universe existing one moment longer. I have no copy of it, except the wildest scribble of a first draught, so that it could never be restored. It has met with extraordinary success from that portion of the public to whose judgment it has been submitted; namely, from my wife. I likewise prefer it to *The Scarlet Letter;* but an author's opinion of his book just after completing it is worth little or nothing, he being then in the hot or cold fit of a fever, and certain to rate it too high or too low."

It was at Lenox, also, that his third and youngest child was born. During that summer Hawthorne determined to leave Lenox, the cottage being much too

small for his larger family. In vain Mrs. Kemble offered them her own beautiful house free of rent for the coming year. Hawthorne could never bring himself to accept such benefits; nor even, when she proposed to receive the same rent he was paying for the red cottage, would he consent. Mrs. Hawthorne wrote to her mother, "I was more troubled at the hindrance Mr. Hawthorne suffered by our being without help a fortnight than by anything else, because he would not let me bear any weight of care or labor, but insisted upon doing everything himself. Yet he says he cannot write deeply during midsummer, at any rate. He can only seize the skirts of ideas, and pin them down for further investigation. Besides, he has not recovered his pristine vigor. The year ending in June was the trying year of his life, as well as of mine, on account of political calumny. I have not yet found again all my wings,

neither is his tread yet again elastic. But the ministrations of nature will have their effect in due time. Mr. Hawthorne thinks it is Salem which he is dragging at his ankles still.

"We find kindest friends on every side. The truest friendliness is the great characteristic of the Sedgwick family in all its branches. They really take the responsibility of my being comfortable. We have fallen into the arms of loving-kindness. Mr. Tappan is a horn of benefits. His shy, dark eyes are always gleaming with hospitable smiles for us."

Hawthorne wrote to Mr. Pike, an old comrade, from Lenox, July, 1851 (at the same time that his wife wrote, "Mr. Hawthorne has but just stepped over the threshold of a hermitage: he is but just *not* a hermit still"): "What a sad account you give of your solitude! I am not likely ever to have the feeling of loneliness you express; and I most heartily wish you would take measures

to remedy it in your own case, by marrying Miss Brookhouse or somebody else as soon as possible. If I were at all in the habit of shedding tears, I should have felt inclined to do so at your description of your present situation,—without family and estranged from your former friends.

"The most important news I have to tell you is that we have another daughter, now about two months old. She is a very bright and healthy child, and neither more nor less handsome than babies generally are. I think I feel more interest in her than I did in the other children at the same age, from the consideration that she is to be the daughter of my age,—the comfort (at least, so it is to be hoped) of my declining years,—the last child whom I expect or intend to have.

"Whenever you feel your solitude quite intolerable (and I can hardly help wishing that it may become so soon), do

come to me. By the way, if I continue to prosper as heretofore in the literary line, I shall soon be in a condition to buy a place; and, if you should hear of one, say, worth from fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars, I wish you would keep your eye on it for me. I should wish it to be on the seacoast or, at all events, with easy access to the sea. . . . I find I do not feel at home among these hills, and should not like to consider myself permanently settled here. I do not get acclimated to the peculiar state of the atmosphere; and, except in mid-winter, I am continually catching cold, and am none so vigorous as I used to be on the seacoast. The same is the case with my wife; and, though the children seem perfectly well, yet I rather think they would flourish better near the sea. Say nothing about my wishes; but, if you see a place likely to suit me, let me know. I shall be in Salem probably as soon as October."

Lowell wrote to Hawthorne after the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables:* "I cannot help believing it a great triumph that you should have been able to deepen and widen the impression made by such a book as *The Scarlet Letter.* It seems to me that the "House" is the most valuable contribution to New England history that has been made. . . . Yesterday is commonly looked upon and written about as of no kin to to-day, though the one is legitimate child of the other, and has its veins filled with the same blood. And the chapter about Alice and the carpenter,—Salem, which would not even allow you so much as Scotland gave Burns, will build you a monument yet for having shown that she did not hang her witches for nothing. I suppose the true office of the historian is to reconcile the present with the past."

Hawthorne's letters to Mr. Fields, during his sojourn in Lenox, are long and intimate. Delightful extracts from them

may be read in the *Yesterdays with Authors;* but, except where they bear immediately upon his life, they are too long to be inserted here. He speaks in them of the value of a true reviewer, saying that "Whipple's notices have done more than pleased me, for they have helped me to see my book." He was much pestered by members of a real Pyncheon family turning up, each one more indignant than the last at the portrayal of their ancestral family, as they insisted upon calling it, in Hawthorne's story. "The joke of the matter is," he wrote, "that I never heard of his grandfather, nor knew that any Pyncheons had ever lived in Salem, but took the name because it suited the tone of my book, and was as much my property, for fictitious purposes, as that of Smith."

Tanglewood Tales and *The Snow Image, and Other Stories,* were evidently in hand that year before he came to Boston in the autumn. He speaks in one letter

of wishing to send a sketch of the veritable porch of Tanglewood, "but my wife has been too unwell to draw it."

"Mrs. Kemble," he continues, "writes very good accounts from London of the reception which my two romances have met with there. She says that they have made a greater sensation than any book since *Jane Eyre;* but probably she is a little, or a good deal, too emphatic in her representation of the matter."

It was thus in the full tide of production, but weary of Lenox, that Hawthorne brought his family back to Boston in the late autumn. "Please God," he says to Mr. Fields, September, 1851, "I mean to look you in the face towards the end of next week; at all events, within ten days. I have stayed here too long and too constantly. To tell you a secret, I am sick to death of Berkshire, and hate to think of spending another winter here."

A black mood had fallen upon him.

He fancied he could not get away; but during Mrs. Hawthorne's absence in the summer, with her two daughters, whom she brought to visit her mother in West Newton, they had evidently arranged to come and pass the winter in her neighborhood, if possible. On the 21st of November, 1851, the family finally flitted away from Berkshire. It was none too soon, for Hawthorne had come to detest the spot with no common hatred. West Newton was surely as strong a contrast as could be found to the beauty of Lenox; but *The Blithedale Romance* was in the air, and Hawthorne seated himself promptly to his task, which was completed in five months.

His next business was to find a spot for a home. He turned to Concord, naturally enough after those first happy years, and presently bought a cottage there which he called "The Wayside." He wrote to Mr. Fields, who was then in England: "How do you like the name of

my estate? My drafts have been pretty heavy of late, in consequence of fitting up my house. You have got just one hundred and fifty pounds more than I expected to receive. It will come in good time, too.

"I meant to have written another *Wonder Book* this summer, but another task has unexpectedly intervened. General Pierce, of New Hampshire, the Democratic nominee for the Presidency, was a college friend of mine, as you know; and we have been intimate through life. He wishes me to write his biography, and I have consented to do so; somewhat reluctantly, however, for Pierce has now reached that altitude when a man, careful of his personal dignity, will begin to think of cutting his acquaintance. But I seek nothing from him, and therefore need not be ashamed to tell the truth of an old friend."

The three most fruitful years of Hawthorne's life thus drew to an end. They

show an admirable record for any author in that space of time.

Although Hawthorne sought nothing of Pierce, it had doubtless long been the first desire of his friend to smooth Hawthorne's path whenever it should be in his power. Upon Mr. Fields's return from England he found Hawthorne in Concord, but already thinking of the Liverpool consulship. "He seemed happy at the thought of flitting, but I wondered if he could possibly be as contented across the water as he was in Concord."

In June, Hawthorne sailed away with his family to Liverpool. "My ancestor left England," he wrote, "in 1630. I return in 1853. I sometimes feel as if I myself had been absent these two hundred and twenty-three years, leaving England just emerging from the feudal system, and finding it, on my return, on the verge of republicanism."

VI.

THE greater part of the next five years was spent in Liverpool in the business of the consulate. This, of course, was not conducive to romance-writing; but Hawthorne at once began a series of *English Note-books*. In his last letter before leaving England, at the close of the year 1857, he wrote Mr. Fields: "I made up a huge package the other day, consisting of seven closely written volumes of journal kept by me since my arrival in England, and filled with sketches of places and men and manners, many of which would doubtless be very delightful to the public. I think I shall seal them up, with directions in my will to have them opened and published a century hence; and your firm shall have the refusal of them."

These journals eventually, upon Hawthorne's return to America, were of course opened; and the volume called

Our Old Home was drawn from them. Also, some years later, Hawthorne's *English Note-books*, made of extracts from these volumes, were published. They give such an admirable autobiographical view of Hawthorne that, however great the temptation may be to continue the interesting details of his life in a new form, it would be but useless labor. Released from cares of office in England after four years of service, Hawthorne joyfully turned his face southward to the Continent, pausing as briefly as possible on his way to Italy, whence he wrote as follows to Mr. Fields: —

"VILLA MONTAUTO, NEAR FLORENCE,
"Sept. 3, 1858.

"Dear Fields,— I am afraid I have staid away too long, and am forgotten by everybody. You have piled up the dusty remnants of my editions, I suppose, in that chamber over the shop, where you once took me to smoke a

cigar, and have crossed my name out of your list of authors without so much as asking whether I am dead or alive. But I like it well enough, nevertheless. It is pleasant to feel at last that I am really away from America, — a satisfaction that I never enjoyed as long as I staid in Liverpool, where it seemed to me that the quintessence of nasal and hand-shaking Yankeedom was continually filtered and sublimated through my consulate, on the way outward and homeward. I first got acquainted with my own countrymen there. At Rome, too, it was not much better. But here in Florence, and in the summer time, and in this secluded villa, I have escaped out of all my old tracks, and am really remote.

"I like my present residence immensely. The house stands on a hill, overlooking Florence, and is big enough to quarter a regiment, insomuch that each member of the family, including servants, has a separate suite of apart-

ments, and there are vast wildernesses of upper rooms into which we have never yet sent exploring expeditions. At one end of the house there is a moss-grown tower, haunted by owls and by the ghost of a monk, who was confined there in the thirteenth century, previous to being burnt at the stake in the principal square of Florence. I hire this villa, tower and all, at twenty-eight dollars a month; but I mean to take it away bodily and clap into a romance, which I have in my head ready to be written out.

"Speaking of romances, I have planned two, one or both of which I could have ready for the press in a few months if I were either in England or America. But I find this Italian atmosphere not favorable to the close toil of composition, although it is a very good air to dream in. I must breathe the fogs of old England or the east winds of Massachusetts in order to put me into working

trim. Nevertheless, I shall endeavor to be busy during the coming winter at Rome; but there will be so much to distract my thoughts that I have little hope of seriously accomplishing anything. It is a pity; for I have really a plethora of ideas, and should feel relieved by discharging some of them upon the public.

"We shall continue here till the end of this month, and shall then return to Rome, where I have already taken a house for six months. In the middle of April we intend to start for home by the way of Geneva and Paris, and, after spending a few weeks in England, shall embark for Boston in July or the beginning of August. After so long an absence (more than five years already, which will be six before you see me at the old 'Corner'), it is not altogether delightful to think of returning. Everybody will be changed, and I myself, no doubt, as much as anybody. Ticknor and you, I suppose, were both upset in

the late religious earthquake; and, when I inquire for you, the clerks will direct me to the 'Business Men's Conference.' It won't do. I shall be forced to come back again and take refuge in a London lodging. London is like the grave in one respect,—any man can make himself at home there; and, whenever a man finds himself homeless elsewhere, he had better either die or go to London.

"Speaking of the grave reminds me of old age and other disagreeable matters; and I would remark that one grows old in Italy twice or three times as fast as in other countries. I have three gray hairs now for one that I brought from England; and I shall look venerable indeed by next summer, when I return. . . .

"Remember me affectionately to all my friends. Whoever has a kindness for me may be assured that I have twice as much for him. . . .

"Your friend,

"NATH. HAWTHORNE."

The winter of 1859 was passed in Rome, where, although his own health was excellent, and he was able at first to make some memoranda for the new story, his *Marble Faun*, which he had dreamed into existence at the Villa Montauto, he was soon fatally interrupted by the illness of his family. His daughter Una was attacked by the Roman fever, which, in the end, affected her brain. Hawthorne suffered as much as it is possible to suffer during the dreary months of that uncertain disease, and he never really recovered from the strain. It was a dark valley through which he walked, and we can readily understand his writing to Mr. Fields: —

"I bitterly detest Rome, and shall rejoice to bid it farewell forever; and I fully acquiesce in all the mischief and ruin that has happened to it, from Nero's conflagration downward. In fact, I wish the very site had been obliterated before I ever saw it." He decided to return to

England as soon as practicable, with the intention of returning home, but wrote again from Rome: "I shall go home, I fear, with a heavy heart, not expecting to be very well contented there. . . . If I were but a hundred times richer than I am, how very comfortable I could be! I consider it a great piece of good fortune that I have had experience of the discomforts and miseries of Italy, and did not go directly home from England. . . . If I had but a house fit to live in, I should be greatly more reconciled to coming home; but I am really at a loss to imagine how we are going to squeeze ourselves into that little old cottage of mine."

Instead of returning at once to America, Hawthorne again settled down in England with the determination of preparing *The Marble Faun* for the press. Leamington proved to be a most comfortable abode, and he wrote steadily here until his health suffered from the strain. Then he went to Redcar, on the northeast

coast, not far from Whitby, where the bracing air restored him. He remained four months at Redcar, walking about the stormy shores of that neighborhood, until the wild wintry weather drove him away. Then the family returned to pass the winter in Leamington and Bath. It was a dull, dark season, and Hawthorne was almost without outside companions save when he took an occasional brief trip to London. But Smith & Elder had paid him generously for his new story, which was going through the press; and, except for the exhaustion caused by the writing of the book and his sad Roman experience, he was, on the whole, as well situated as possible. Mr. Fields was on the Continent himself during the winter; and Hawthorne wrote frequently, making cheerful plans for an early meeting and a return home together during the summer of 1860.

"We met in London early in May," wrote Mr. Fields; "and, as our lodgings

were not far apart, we were frequently together. I recall many pleasant dinners with him and mutual friends. . . . One of our most royal times was at a parting dinner at the house of Barry Cornwall. Among the notables present were Kinglake and Leigh Hunt. . . . I remember when we went up to the drawing-room to join the ladies, after dinner, the two dear old poets, Leigh Hunt and Barry Cornwall, mounted the stairs with their arms round each other in a very tender and loving way. Hawthorne often referred to this scene as one he would not have missed for a great deal."

VII.

THE summer after our arrival in America Hawthorne passed quietly at "The Wayside," in Concord. The house had been enlarged and repaired, and was much more comfortable; but, alas! in September Hawthorne wrote: "We are in great trouble on account of our poor Una, in whom the bitter dregs of that Roman fever are still rankling, and have now developed themselves in a way which the physicians foreboded. I do not like to write about it, but will tell you when we meet. Say nothing. I am continually reminded nowadays of a response I once heard a drunken sailor make to a pious gentleman who asked him how he felt, 'Pretty d—d miserable, thank God!' It very well expresses my thorough discomfort and forced acquiescence."

With the new year, 1861, his daughter regained something of her former health;

and he seemed "happy," wrote Mr. Fields, "in the dwelling he had put in order for the calm and comfort of his middle and later life."

Here he began *The Dolliver Romance*, "trudging," as he says, "to and fro on my hilltop, but not as yet with a pen in my hand." Suddenly, as all great calamities appear sudden at the first stroke, the war broke out between the North and the South. Hawthorne was deeply agitated, and unable to continue his work. He spoke jestingly, sometimes, saying he had much to be thankful for because Julian was too young and he was too old to serve; but his heart was filled with dismay. Beside, his position was a very trying one. The Democratic party had proved itself unequal to seeing the right way and walking in it.

Hawthorne was not unstirred by the disapprobation of his fellows nor destitute of sincere love for his native land;

but, as he once said in conversation, he was not made like Wendell Phillips, who could move like a horse in blinders straight to the end he had in view. On the contrary, it was his fate to look at every side of a question; and he often found himself standing irresolute, not knowing which path to take. He wrote from Washington, in 1862, where Leutze painted a portrait of him: "I see in a newspaper that Holmes is going to write a song on the sinking of the *Cumberland;* and, feeling it to be a subject of national importance, it occurs to me that he might like to know her present condition. . . . I did not think it was in me to be so moved by any spectacle of the kind. Bodies still occasionally float up from it."

He did not make clear to himself how near to his heart and life lay the condition of the country. He was torn by dissenting voices. Upon his return he wrote a paper for the *Atlantic Monthly*

entitled "Chiefly about War Matters," a very sincere piece of observation and truth-telling. His partisan views colored everything, and enabled him to write a description of Abraham Lincoln which Mr. Fields found — like most plain speaking in the wrong place — very undesirable to publish. "I would not speak of the President," he wrote to Hawthorne, "as 'Uncle Abe,' but call him the President in every instance where he is mentioned." The result was that Hawthorne amiably left out the whole description, which may now be found in *Yesterdays with Authors*. But the description to-day is still petty. When we consider what Abraham Lincoln was to this great people, we can only rejoice that Hawthorne was saved from writing himself down in that crucial epoch as one without sympathy for his country's helper.

Hawthorne did not know himself at this time. He loved Franklin Pierce,

but he also loved his other friends and his country. The sentiment against himself, so easily awakened in that sensitive era, reacted painfully, and helped to drive him again back upon his own solitude. The arrows of sorrow, private and public, were striking deeper than any one knew, even those nearest to him. He was only fifty-nine years old when these griefs fell upon him, and born, one would say in looking upon his noble figure, with the gift of uncommon physical strength; but the delicacy of his mental organization affected his whole being. Longfellow wrote of him in this later period, "Hawthorne looks gray and grand, with something very pathetic about him."

His daughter, Mrs. Lathrop, who was much younger than the two elder children, and who never looked upon her father as a playmate and companion, as they did, says: "I always felt a great awe of him,—a tremendous sense of his

power. His large eyes, liquid with blue and white light and deep with dark shadows, told me, even when I was very young, that he was in some respects different from other people. . . . We were usually a silent couple when off for a walk together, or when we met by chance in the household. . . . I longed myself to hear the splendidly grotesque fairy tales . . . which Una and Julian had revelled in when our father had been at leisure in Lenox and Concord."

This description portrays Hawthorne as he appeared to those who knew him only after his youth had passed. The slim athletic figure, the soft brown hair, the rapid movement, changed at a comparatively early age; and, though no less handsome, he was a large, slow-moving, iron-gray man, with marvellous dreamful eyes. No photograph, and no portrait, has ever done justice to Hawthorne's eyes. They were soft and kind, but in-seeing. I do not remember ever having the im-

pression of being looked at by Hawthorne. There was, however, a very keen sense of one's being understood by him. Words — speech — did not seem to matter much: he understood as it were, in spite of the unsatisfactory medium of the tongue; and I never heard him talk but once during four years of intimate intercourse, when he really seemed to lay aside his own painful self-consciousness and speak because it was a pleasure to communicate what lay in him to be spoken.

His wife's distinguished gift was a great boon to him in social ways. He could turn the whole burden of any occasion safely over to her. He appeared to find a genuine sense of repose as he listened to her somewhat romantic rendering of every-day events, which made her a kind of Scheherazade dealing with the commonplaces of ordinary life.

During the year 1863 he was busied

with preparing the sketches from his English note-book to be called *Our Old Home.* "Those were troublous days," wrote Mr. Fields afterwards, "full of war, gloom, and general despondency. The North was naturally suspicious of all public men who did not bear a conspicuous part in helping to put down the Rebellion. . . . Several of Hawthorne's friends," Emerson, Longfellow, Hoar, and others, "on learning that he intended to inscribe his book to Franklin Pierce, came to me, and begged that I would, if possible, help Hawthorne to see that he ought not to do anything to jeopardize the currency of his new volume. Accordingly, I wrote to him just what many of his friends had said to me; and this is his reply to my letter, which bears the date July 18, 1863: 'I thank you for your note of the 15th instant, and have delayed my reply thus long in order to ponder deeply on your advice, smoke cigars over it, and

see what it might be possible for me to do towards taking it. I find that it would be a piece of poltroonery in me to withdraw either the dedication or the dedicatory letter. My long and intimate relations with Pierce render the dedication altogether proper, especially as regards this book, which would have had no existence without his kindness; and, if he is so exceedingly unpopular that his name is enough to sink the volume, there is so much the more need that an old friend should stand by him. I cannot, merely on account of pecuniary profit or literary reputation, go back from what I have deliberately felt and thought it right to do; and, if I were to tear out the dedication, I should never look at the volume again without remorse and shame. As for the literary public, it must accept my book precisely as I think fit to give it, or let it alone."

When the book was finally published

in the autumn, there were a great many adverse criticisms printed on both sides of the water. It was not a cheering reception. Hawthorne said of it himself: "It is not a good nor a weighty book, nor does it deserve any great amount either of praise or censure. I don't care about seeing any more notices of it." "Meantime," continues Mr. Fields, "*The Dolliver Romance*, which had been laid aside on account of the exciting scenes through which the country was then passing, and which unfitted him for the composition of a work of the imagination, made little progress."

"I don't see much probability," he wrote, "of my having the first chapter of the romance ready so soon as you want it. There are two or three chapters ready to be written; but I am not yet robust enough to begin, and I feel as if I should never carry it through. . . Those verses entitled 'Weariness' in the last magazine seem to me profoundly touching. I, too,

am weary, and begin to look ahead for the Wayside Inn."

The crises of the war and his household grief had affected him vitally. Mrs. Hawthorne wrote in November, 1863: "On Tuesday night Mr. Hawthorne was very ill. . . . He had been so long anxious that I feared typhus, as his head was bad; . . . but he is well, only a little languid. He has been on the hill even. I fear his coming back will be sad. . . . As I was sitting by his side one day, I took up the Confessions of St. Augustine. . . . When we stand on the brink of a possible great woe, how the soul listens with new and almost fierce attention and hunger for such utterance as his." The almost abnormal sensitiveness of her nature led her to foresee and to understand. She was in a sense "prepared" from that hour.

In December Hawthorne wrote to his publisher: "I have not yet had courage to read the Dolliver proof-sheet, but will

set about it soon, though with terrible reluctance, such as I never felt before." And in January, 1864, he again writes with some depression about his work. In February he says definitely, "I cannot finish the work unless a great change comes over me."

In March he came to our house in Boston once more. We were much shocked by the change in his appearance. He was on his way to Washington with Mr. Ticknor, hoping that good might result for each from the rest and warmer climate; but Mr. Ticknor's sudden death in Philadelphia, the grief, and difficulty attendant upon their absence from home, were too much for Hawthorne in his weak condition. He returned very ill. Early in May General Pierce proposed to take him in his own carriage through the lovely hill country of New England. They were to meet in Boston and go to Plymouth, in New Hampshire, by rail.

Hawthorne's parting from his wife and children in Concord was full of shadowing and unexpressed misery; and, when he reached Boston, it was evident to all his friends that a change had indeed fallen upon him. Dr. Holmes wrote, "Looking along the street, I saw a form in advance which could be only his,— but how changed from his former port and figure!" Yet how impossible for any one to prefigure his swift vanishing! That same night Hawthorne fell asleep and never woke upon our world.

It was on the morning of May 19 that General Pierce wrote to Mr. Fields, after a telegram announcing Hawthorne's death: "He lies upon his side, his position so perfectly natural and easy — his eyes closed — that it is difficult to realize, while looking upon his noble face, that this is death. He must have passed from natural slumber to that from which there is no waking, without the slightest movement."

The room in which death fell upon him,

"Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,"

looks towards the east; and, standing in it, as I have frequently done since he passed out silently into the skies, it is easy to imagine the scene on that spring morning.

"On the 24th of May we carried Hawthorne through the blossoming orchards of Concord, and laid him down under a group of pines on a hillside, overlooking historic fields. All the way from the village church to the grave the birds kept up a perpetual melody. The sun shone brightly and the air was sweet and pleasant, as if death had never entered the world. Longfellow and Emerson, Channing and Hoar, Agassiz and Lowell, Greene and Whipple, Alcott and Clarke, Holmes and Hillard, and other friends whom he loved, walked slowly by his side that beautiful spring

morning. The companion of his youth and his manhood, for whom he would willingly at any time have given up his own life, Franklin Pierce, was there among the rest, and scattered flowers into the grave. The unfinished Romance, which had cost him so much anxiety, the last literary work on which he had ever been engaged, was laid on his coffin."

"Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain."

These words of Mr. Fields and the poem of Longfellow, two friends whom he sincerely loved, still serve to-day as the most perfect picture of his burial and the worthiest requiem of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

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The twelve volumes enumerated below for further reading in the study of Hawthorne are those which have been selected as at once aggregately the most useful and the most interesting among the mass of volumes on the subject that has so far been produced. No pretence is here made toward completeness as bibliography. Magazine articles have been entirely omitted, no matter what their original value, since whatever they contain can be found practically reproduced in book form.

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II. MEMOIR OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, WITH STORIES NOW FIRST PUBLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY. By Alexander Japp (H. A. Page, *pseud.*). (London, 1872: Henry S. King & Co.) A volume almost more historical than critical and literary.

III. POETS AND NOVELISTS: A SERIES OF LITERARY STUDIES. By George B. Smith. (London, 1875: Smith, Elder & Co.) This contains an essay on Hawthorne from the English standpoint.

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